

D O N B L A C K

21  
DAY

# VICTORY GUIDE

— WITH —

PRAYER &  
FASTING

CORNERSTONE<sup>™</sup>  
NETWORK

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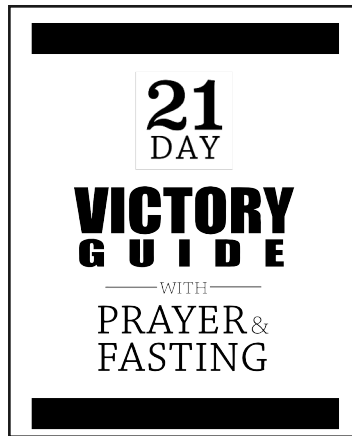
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“Thus says the Lord GOD: ‘Behold, I will lift up my hand to the nations, and raise my signal to the peoples...’” Isaiah 49:22 (RSV)

Come quickly, Lord Jesus!

Printed in USA



## **FACING THE TRUE ENEMY!**

Often when I am deeply engaged in one of life's struggles, I look up to the heavens and ask this heartfelt question: "Lord what is it that I am missing about being a Christian?"

I am really asking God, *Why is it so difficult to believe, and then to receive, what the Bible promises?* On the other hand, why is it so easy to stop trusting God and then to jump in and try to solve the issue in my own power?

I know that most of you that are reading this understand and share these struggles.

Jesus' disciples faced a "real life" challenge where their trust fell short. He had sent them out to help people with His supernatural authority. They experienced many life-changing miracles using the name of Jesus! But there was one time when they failed to be able to cast out a demon from a young man. Then Jesus stepped in, and the devils had to go. The disciples came to Jesus in private and asked why they were not able to help this man.

He said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting" (Matthew 17:20-21, NKJV).

Many think that Jesus was saying to them that prayer and fasting is necessary to cast out "super demons," but that's not what I believe He was teaching them. His point was that prayer and fasting deliver us, His followers, from unbelief. Let's not confuse faith and unbelief. Faith is a supernatural energy that emanates from God. Every Christian has been given faith from the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:3). It then develops with use and by digesting God's Word (Romans 10:17).

Unbelief means to set aside trust and replace it with doubt. The biggest obstacle for Christians

to fulfill God's plan is dealing with unbelief. It pops up in a minute of decision, and it is motivated by fear. In this story, Jesus didn't tell the disciples that they didn't have faith; He said that their faith was overshadowed by unbelief. There was something about this particular young man or the circumstances of the story that created fear, and they failed in the mission.

What lesson does this teach us? It is clear that our victory will depend on how we deal with unbelief. Jesus gave us instructions on how to overcome it and win the fight. One of the greatest weapons in our spiritual arsenal is fasting with targeted prayer.

Our challenge for the next 21 days is to take proactive steps in the direction of trust and surrender through the discipline of prayer and fasting. Won't you join us?

## WHY 21 DAYS?

In Daniel, Chapter 10, we find Daniel seeking God with intensity for 21 days. God sent the aid of Michael, the Archangel, but it took the angel delegation 21 days to break through with the revelation of God's answer to Daniel's prayer and fasting. This was a period of intense spiritual warfare because the answer that Michael delivered to the earth was both for Daniel's day and a prophetic message for what was to come. Daniel's vision is recorded in Daniel 7:21-22.

### Daniel's Spiritual Game Plan:

1. He prayed and fasted. Jeremiah was specific in saying that the Lord would turn a deaf ear to His people for 70 years. Now, however, Daniel knew that the *kairos* time had come to seek the Lord for an end to Israel's captivity.
2. He repented for himself and his people. Daniel confessed and repented not only for his own sin, but for the sins, iniquities, and failures of the Israelites that resulted in their captivity in the first place.
3. He received an angelic revelation. God honored Daniel's efforts and sent His archangel, Michael. After three weeks of prayer, fasting, and repentance, an angel appeared to Daniel to tell him what was written in the "Book of the Future." In other words, he told Daniel what would happen to his people.
4. He received a revelation for the future. Because of Jeremiah's prophecy, Daniel understood the times in which he was living. Because he understood the times, he saw his window of opportunity and began to seek the Lord with great fervency. When he did, he gained an understanding of the future God had for his people, and through

obedience to God's commands, could move out of bondage and into freedom.

## **GOD DESIRES TO GIVE US SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT HOW TO WIN IN LIFE HIS WAY.**

The Apostle Paul revealed a deep truth about prayer and fasting's impact in the spiritual world.

"We speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of the age, nor the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew, for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. Eye has not seen or ear heard ... the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit" (1 Corinthians 2:6-10).

### **God shows us powerful keys to our victory as we fast and pray:**

- God's wisdom is perfect. The best of man's natural wisdom is flawed.
- Satan and all his devils do not have access to God's wisdom.
- The authority of demonic forces is limited.
- There still remains wisdom that has been hidden since the beginning of time, for His glory.
- Through the redemptive cross of Jesus Christ, you have access to this wisdom.
- God desires to release this wisdom to us as we get to know Him intimately, through prayer and fasting.
- This wisdom will overthrow our spiritual enemies and give us abundant life.

## **WHAT IS FASTING?**

I work hard in an attempt to make complicated principles easy to understand. Many times, the reason for the complications are man-made rules and requirements. All too often we are encouraged to comply with someone else's personal opinions on how to successfully Win in Life. That is the human way. Human nature has a desire to follow someone who we think can lead us to victory.

God has placed men and women in our lives who are gifted to teach, encourage, and speak His Word over us. But it all comes down to our personal obedience. How will you and I answer the call of His Spirit's leading and conviction? No one else can run your race or win your victory.

## **FASTING IS A POWERFUL WEAPON TO PUT INTO PLACE IN OUR SPIRITUAL BATTLES.**

My definition of fasting is simple. Fasting is to temporarily remove something from your life that you enjoy and replace it with a purposeful encounter with God. What you remove isn't bad or sinful; it is something that would be perfectly fine for you to continue to enjoy. Many times it's food, but it doesn't have to be. Ask God what He would like for you to replace for a season of greater intimacy with Him. Let's not be legalistic about what or how long the fasting period needs to be. The most important thing is that we fast intentionally. We need to focus our prayer and fasting on a specific answer, breakthrough, or revelation both for ourselves or for someone else.

### **What the Bible Says About Fasting:**

- Special revelation - Exodus 34:27-28
- In times of war - Judges 20:26
- Courage and wisdom - Esther 4:3, 16
- In times of grief - Nehemiah 1:4;  
1 Samuel 31:13; 1 Chronicles 10:12
- Spiritual renewal - 1 Kings 19:1-9
- In time of mourning - Daniel 10:1-3
- For repentance - Jonah 3:5, Daniel 6:18
- Ministry preparation - Matthew 4:2
- Spiritual power - Mark 9:29
- Ministry commissioning - Acts 14:23
- For personal holiness - 1 Corinthians 7:5
- Spiritual discipline - Matthew 6:16-18

## **PREPARING FOR YOUR 21-DAY ADVENTURE**

Often, we enter into a season of prayer and fasting because we are facing challenges or problems that seem to be beyond our ability to handle. This is a good motivation to align our spirit, mind, and body in seeking God's direction. But I also encourage you to move into prayer and fasting even when you are living in peace and with success. Why not utilize this life-changing practice of discipline and focus on a regular basis, to sharpen your ability to hear and obey God's instruction? Or just to be more enveloped by His presence?

Let's not be overcome by our current condition and fail to look forward to new areas of victory in God's Kingdom! As you prepare for this powerful exercise, ask God to give you new goals and visions for your life.

## Steps For Preparation

- Spirit – Pray often in your heavenly prayer language. Make a list of what you are asking God to reveal. Keep a journal of how He answers. Pick a secret place to pray.
- Mind – Create four or five flash cards with scriptures that encourage you. Use these to focus your mind when it tries to drift while you are in prayer and meditation.
- Body – If you are fasting food, prepare by eating less the day before the fast begins. Stay away from red meat, bread, and sugar. Focus your diet more on fruit, vegetables, and broth. This is true for when your fast ends too.

## Personal Guidelines

*Prayer and fasting* is a very personal discipline. I have developed the habit of fasting on the schedule of the Jewish day. It begins at sunset and ends at sunset. I like to begin a fast at 6:00 or 7:00 pm. This gives me the ability to focus on prayer in the early evening and continue fasting until a late dinner the next day. Mostly I fast on a one-day basis, but I have done longer times depending on the situation.

During the fast, I drink water and a hot tea named "Perfect Fasting." You can find it in a health food store or on Amazon. In times of extended fasting, I create a fasting drink made up of one gallon of distilled water, the juice from 4 lemons and ¼ cup of pure maple syrup. I mix these into a glass or hard plastic bottle and keep in the refrigerator. Then, during the fasting time, I will drink 8 ounces to help with the hunger. This is also a great detoxifier for your body.

Fasting from food has become a very popular exercise in the health and fitness world. Many experts promote the multiple benefits of what they call IF (intermittent fasting).

- Aids in maintaining a healthy heart
- Provides relief from those who suffer from epilepsy
- Helps to relieve toxic side effects of chemotherapy
- Helps to balance the body's hormones
- Useful for detoxifying toxins
- Used to treat acute pancreatitis (www.organicfacts.net)

## YOU ARE MOVING IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION!

Fasting is good for your body and for your mind on its own, but we enter it with spiritual goals. Fasting alone is only for the flesh, and that is ok, but we also want to focus for the mind and spirit.

### **These are seasons of personal sacrifice for a higher purpose.**

- Our hearts are hungrier for God than our bodies are for food.
- Our spirit's cry for revelation is more powerful than our mind's desire for entertainment.
- We may be standing at a critical crossroads of decision where we need God's wisdom and discernment to choose the right direction.
- Perhaps someone you love is facing a serious challenge and they need a miracle from God.

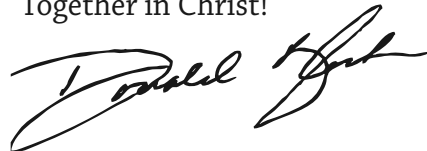
These are just a few of the reasons that motivate the decision to supercharge your prayers with fasting. When you do, something supernatural takes place. Fasting with prayer doesn't change God, it changes you. When you surrender to our Heavenly Father, He takes the controls.

I am excited that you are joining in this *21-Day Victory Fast*. We are in this together. I have created this daily journal that will help you stay focused as we seek the Lord's presence, purpose, and power.

I believe that God will meet us in mighty ways — not just on Day 21, but every day — with His precious Holy Spirit's presence. So let's get ready to begin! Great days lie ahead: times of sweet peace, renewed energy, and strength with a greater focus on what is really important in our lives.

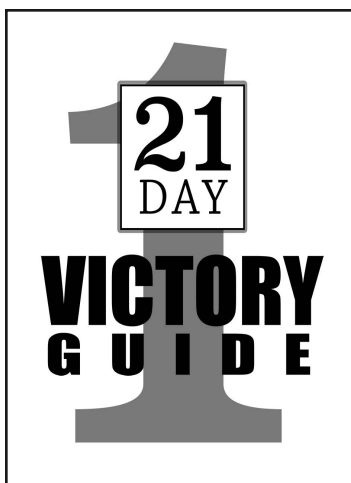
I will be joining you in this season. Let's promise to pray for each other.

Together in Christ!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Black', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Don Black





## TODAY'S FOCUS: GOD CAN CHANGE EVERYTHING!

Scripture: "Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him" (Luke 8:38-39).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

This is an amazing story of transformation that is found in Luke 8:26-39. This poor man in the Gadarenes had been possessed by a legion of demons. His life had been taken over by evil to the extent that he lived in the tombs with dead.

With just a word, Jesus set him free. What had previously held him in the chains of bondage were broken! This same power is in you today. As a Christian, the Holy Spirit resides in you and total victory is yours for the claiming.

Freedom is yours because He loves you and because He wants for you to go and tell your world what God has done for you today!

### PRAY TODAY:

- Use the name of Jesus to speak to the evil that is dominating you, and cast it out.
- Let's pray that we will be empowered by the Holy Spirit to heal the brokenhearted and set the captives free.
- Pray and intercede for the three billion unreached people in our world.

**TODAY'S FASTING:** Choose your fasting object for today. Start small and grow. Why not fast from a form of entertainment? Facebook? One meal? TV? Write it on the line below and stick to it.

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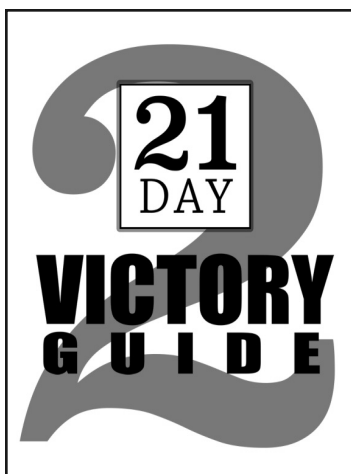
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: LOVE MUST BE SUPERNATURAL

Scripture: "He who does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 John 4:8).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Love is the most misused word in the English language. Its true meaning is lost. We love our nation. We love pizza. We love our dogs and cats. We love our friends, and we love our family. You and I know that we feel differently about each of these things.

What we need is more words that reflect our affection. I would like to reserve the word "love" for higher calling.

The apostle John describes love as being God. Everything God does is motivated by His love. It's His nature; it's His character; it's who God is. It is impossible for God NOT to Love.

His type of love isn't natural; it's supernatural! You and I can't love His way with our human nature. That's impossible! Our love may be strong, but it does not compare to God's. In order to love His way, we must be filled with His Holy Spirit and allow Him to love through us.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit.
- Pray for the hearts of those God puts in your life to be touched by God's great love.
- Pray for eyes of understanding — that they will be open to how His love flows through you.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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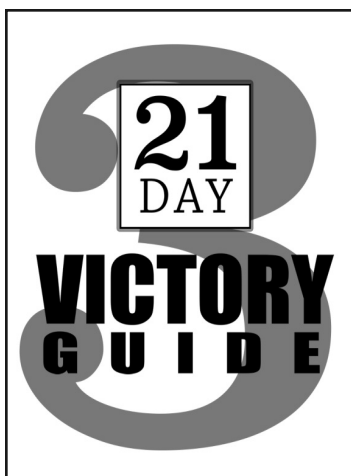
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: PRAYING IN THE SPIRIT

Scripture: "He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church" (1 Corinthians 14:4).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

One of the greatest divisions in the Church is the topic of Speaking in Tongues. For more than fifteen hundred years, the debate has raged on whether Tongues are still relevant for Christians. My purpose here is not to approach this from a theological perspective, but rather from my own experience.

I approach the Bible as the ALL-inspired Word of God, from Genesis to Revelations. I don't want to be the one to pick and choose what is in or what is out. It's all in for me. I don't claim to understand it all, but that's for another time.

Paul was clear that praying with a prayer language (tongues) builds up my faith. This I have found to be absolutely true. I pray in the Spirit many times each day. Truthfully, I don't know how I could make it without this wonderful gift from God.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for a fresh outpouring and baptism in God's Spirit.
- Pray for all people to pursue all spiritual gifts, including the gift of tongues.
- Pray in tongues, and be at peace.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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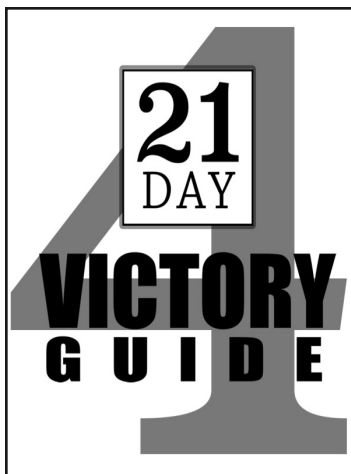
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - THE WORD OF WISDOM

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit..." (1 Corinthians 12:7-8).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

We all need words of wisdom from the Holy Spirit in our daily life, so we will know how to handle more complex problems or issues that can occur at a moment's notice. Here are some examples where we could receive words of wisdom directly from the Holy Spirit:

- Should I take this new job?
- Detailed answers for a tough question.
- Should I buy or rent?

As you can see, there are literally an infinite number of possibilities where you will need God's wisdom to get you safely through the problem or dilemma that you face. Again, since our own human intelligence is imperfect and limited in its ability to apply real wisdom to handle and solve some of life's real tough problems, we all need the wisdom of God flowing through our lives on a regular basis so we can handle and overcome many of life's adversities that come our way.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Let's ask God to allow us to operate in the word of wisdom that liberates and empowers our lives and those around us.
- Pray that we speak up when it is the right time.
- Pray that our leaders will be given words of wisdom.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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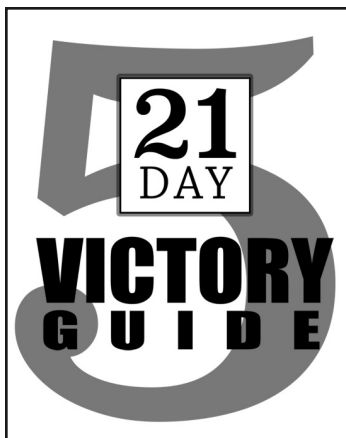
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ... to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7, 8).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

The Word of Knowledge is a supernatural ability for knowledge and insight being given directly to you by the Holy Spirit. You did not learn this information by study or experience. It doesn't come from your own mind or your own intelligence levels.

These words of knowledge originate directly from the Holy Spirit and will literally cover an infinite number of things in your, or someone else's, daily life. The Word of Knowledge may cover anything — from something very trivial, such as where you may have misplaced your car keys, to complicated life-saving knowledge on how to solve an impending crisis or emergency. This gift is God supernaturally downloading answers into your spirit that you would have no way of knowing in the natural.

### PRAY TODAY:

Heavenly Father,

I desire all that you desire to give me. Please fill me with your Holy Spirit and all of His gifts. I welcome the gift of the word of knowledge. I confess that there is much that I don't know and understand. I want to make wise decisions and help others to do that too. Amen.

- The next time you don't have an answer, ask God.
- Ask for a word to share with a friend who is going through hard times.
- Pray for our leaders to be given words of knowledge.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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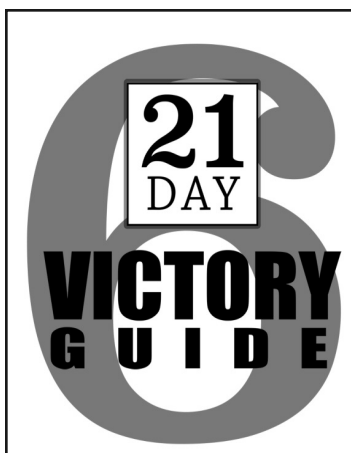
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - THE GIFT OF FAITH

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another faith by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7, 9).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

God has given every person on earth a certain measure of faith. Without it, we would not be able to get saved, as the Bible tells us that we are saved by "faith" through grace. As we walk with the Lord, our faith will continue to grow to higher levels — watching God work in our lives and learning more by studying the Bible. However, there are times that our own levels of faith in the Lord will not be enough to win the victory in a sudden set of circumstances.

Here is an example: Say you find yourself in a situation where you come upon another person in an emergency medical challenge. A man is having a sudden heart attack. You are moved by the Holy Spirit with a gift of faith that this man would survive. You pray and release that faith into the scene and trust God for the results. A gift of faith suddenly elevates and escalates spiritual action and supernatural results.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for the wisdom to discern what leaps of faith are human impulses versus divine impressions, and for the courage to follow God's direction.
- Ask God to show you how to diminish the noise of fear, criticism, and anxiety that might be preventing you from hearing Him.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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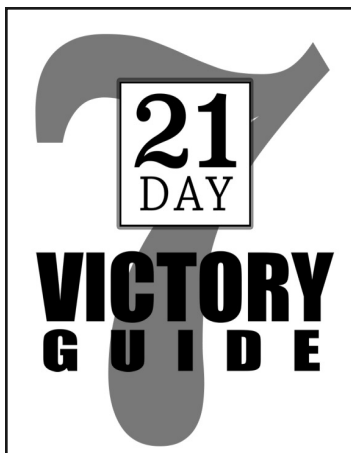
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - HEALINGS

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:7, 9).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

When walking in the anointing of the gift of Healings, the Holy Spirit can deliver through any believer supernatural healing from any kind of disease, illness, or sickness. No one has a permanent manifestation of the gift of healing. Healing is a gift to the sick, and the Holy Spirit may choose to use any believer who is standing in faith to deliver it.

Not only can the Holy Spirit directly heal you with your own personal prayers to the Lord, but He can also use you as an anointed vessel to manifest His healing power through to help heal someone else. Your role will be to have the courage to speak out what He wants you to say to that person, and then to lay hands on them for the healing power to be released in their body.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for a renewal of faith in the hearts of Christians to contend for the promise of physical healing for those in need.
- Pray that God will lead you to someone who needs prayer for healing.
- Do you need a healing? Find another like-minded believer and ask them to join with you in prayer for the gift of healing. Why not anoint yourself with oil as an act of faith?
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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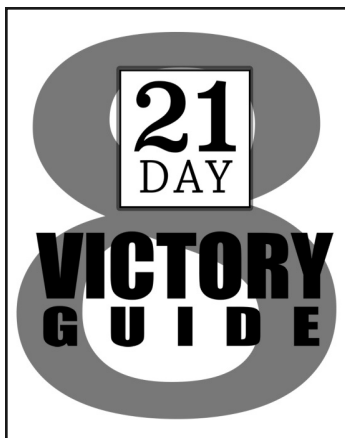
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - THE WORKING OF MIRACLES

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another the working of miracles ..." (1 Corinthians 12:7, 10).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

My definition of a miracle is that it is a supernatural event that is motivated by God's love. Please note that demonic powers can demonstrate in the supernatural, but they are not driven by God's love. The gift of Working of Miracles is a very special intersection of the natural and the supernatural. The Holy Spirit who lives in you is not limited to the natural. He is all-powerful. Nothing is beyond His capability. With the gift of Working of Miracles, we must expand our thinking about what is possible in our lives. We alone limit the possibilities. The gift of miracles supersedes the laws of man and nature to demonstrate the Sovereignty and love of our Heavenly Father.

Good examples of miracles from the Bible:

1. Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding of Cana.
2. Jesus feeding 5,000 people by multiplying 5 loaves of bread and two fish.
3. God parting the Red Sea for Moses and the children of Israel.
4. Daniel not being eaten by the lions in the lion's den.
5. Peter walking on water.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit to come out of your life today.
- Pray and ask for more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to flow through you.
- Pray for opportunities for the miraculous manifestation of God's gifts.
- Listen for His reply, then write it below.

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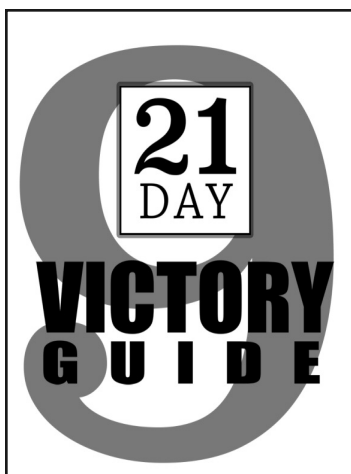
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - PROPHECY

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another prophecy" (1 Corinthians 12:7,10).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

There is nothing sweeter than to be able to receive a direct, clear, prophetic Word from the Lord — for yourself, or to be able to share with someone else. God gives messages in order to help edify and build up, and encourage.

The Holy Spirit's voice is always a direct, clear, prophetic word to His children. The Bible tells us that God uses the gift of prophecy to speak edification, exhortation, and comfort to our hearts. We all need to experience God's *Rhema* (His revealed Word) in our lives. Prophecy is given from God through this gift of prophecy. God is always willing to speak His Word. Are we willing to listen?

I do want to warn that not every word proclaimed is Prophecy. God's present voice will always align with His written Word, and every prophetic message must be confirmed by two or more people that have spiritual discernment.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Ask for boldness to become messengers of hope through the gift of the prophetic by the power of the Holy Spirit, and invite Him to increase our awareness of His voice and our call to divine appointments.
- Plead for His presence and our awareness of His presence every moment of every day, so that we become vibrant kingdom agents in answer to Jesus' prayer: "Thy kingdom come."
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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### YOUR PRAYER JOURNAL:

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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - DISCERNING OF SPIRITS

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another discerning of spirits" (1 Corinthians 12:7,10).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

The gift of Discerning of Spirits is one that Christians really need to utilize in the dangerous and perilous times that we are now living in. We must walk wisely and choose God's way as we navigate through each new day.

The first thing to note in the scripture is that the "s" in the word "spirits" is lower case. This means that it is not referring to the Holy Spirit. What Paul was teaching is that this gift is used for discerning or identifying the following three kinds of motivating spirits: 1. Demonic spirits, 2. God's angels, 3. Human spirits.

With this gift, the Holy Spirit gives you supernatural discernment, insight, and knowledge involving these three kinds of spirits. Many times, this gift will be used to fully expose what is really operating behind the scenes and the motivation for the person. To WIN God's Way, we must operate in all of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially Discernment.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for God's people to have the ability to discern the difference between the authentic and the counterfeit in the spirit world.
- Pray for resulting maturity, growth, and effectiveness in spiritual ministry for God's people as they seek to be used by God.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

**TODAY'S FASTING:** Choose your fasting object for today. Start small and grow. Why not fast from a form of entertainment? Facebook? One meal? TV? Write it on the line below and stick to it.

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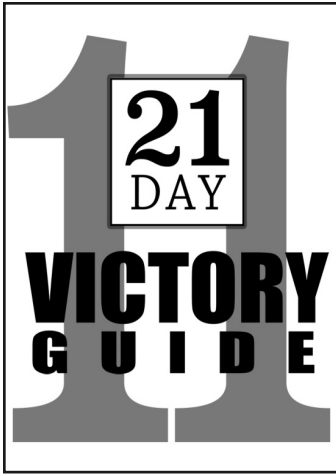
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - TONGUES & INTERPRETATION

Scripture: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all ... to another *different* kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues." (1 Corinthians 12:7,10).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Consider with me the idea that God desires to speak to us personally and give us His living word for our lives. This truth is almost too hard to comprehend, much less to believe. But, friend, it is absolutely true! The Creator of everything has made a way to supernaturally connect with you and me in a very private and personal way.

That is exactly what the Spiritual gift of Tongues and Interpretation does. Only God could come up with this supernatural connection. To speak in Tongues is for the Spirit inside you to pray through you directly to Him in a language that bypasses our brain. The Bible says, when we do, we pray mysteries to God. It's His perfect prayer delivered in a perfect way.

The gift of Interpretation is when God wants us and others to understand His message with our language. God loves us so much that He gave us a special love language with which to talk with Him.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Holy Spirit, move through me today with Your gifts to bring others your love, word, and power.
- Holy Spirit, I ask for a greater outpouring of the gift of tongues and interpretation in my life and ministry.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

**TODAY'S FASTING:** Choose your fasting object for today. Start small and grow. Why not fast from a form of entertainment? Facebook? One meal? TV? Write it on the line below and stick to it.

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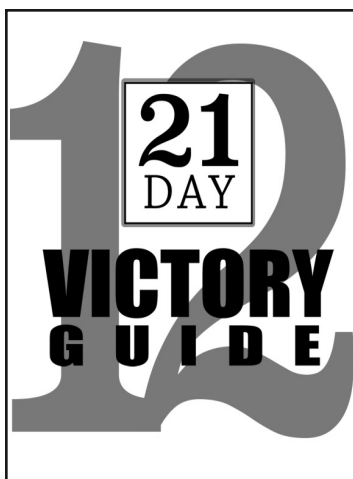
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - HELPS

Scripture: "And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues" (1 Corinthians 12:28).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Every believer should seek to be used in the Spiritual gift of Helps. When we operate in this gift, our heart's desire is to step up and do something for someone else. As we flow in Helps, we will do our special assignment joyfully and take the responsibilities off of others' shoulders. We will serve humbly and have no problems sacrificing time and energy to do God's work.

Remember we are still talking about a supernatural Spiritual gift. This doesn't describe a personality trait or a person's temperament. The Holy Spirit gives this gift for purposes of Kingdom work. In my experience, the gift of Helps oftentimes is an entry position into one of the 5-Fold ministry leadership offices described in Ephesians, Chapter 4. This is a service gift that operates in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for opportunities to be agents of transformation for someone in need in your church and community.
- Pray that God would stir up in us the gifts that He has given us that may have been dormant in our ministries.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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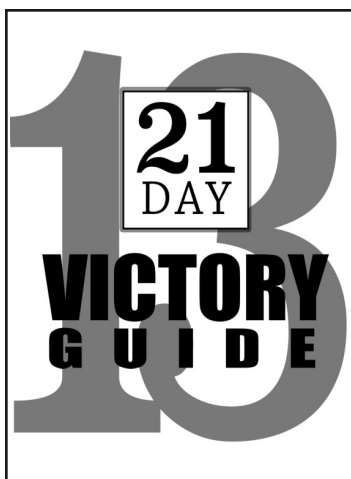
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: SPIRITUAL GIFTS - ENCOURAGEMENT

Scripture: "... he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

All Christians are called to encourage others: "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing" (1 Thessalonians 5:11, ESV). Believers can encourage one another through time together, encouraging words, gifts, prayers, and other means.

One of the strongest examples found in the New Testament is Barnabas. Barnabas sold a field that he owned to give the money to the church (Acts 4:36-37). He would become known as a son of encouragement and later helped bring Paul into the church as a leader. God revealed his giftedness through his life lived for Christ.

This Spiritual gift of Encouragement is inspired when God leads us to people who feel hopeless and are ready to quit. When faced with this type of challenge, the Gift of Encouragement provides us with the ability to give comfort and a renewed hope. Many times, this gift is used in combination with Words of Wisdom, Knowledge, and Prophecy.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for the eyes to see those around us who could use encouragement.
- Pray for the grace to walk alongside others, and be present with them and whatever they are going through.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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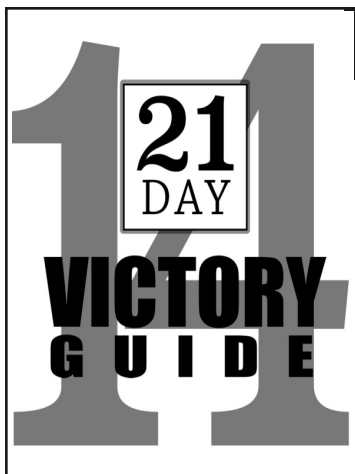
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - JOY

Scripture: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

The first thing we need to make sure we understand is that there is a major difference between the experience of happiness and a life of joy. Happiness is a wonderful feeling that quickly comes

when something good happens. And just as fast as it came, it will leave when something or someone causes trouble.

But the Joy that Paul describes is quite different. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit. That means when the Holy Spirit is present and in control in our life, we have His joy present. This is true regardless of the circumstances of the moment. God's joy is steady and stable. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray that the church would become known for the Holy Spirit's infectious joy.
- Pray for the persecuted church around the world to have a song of joy in the midst of the darkness.
- Pray that today you will choose God's joy.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

**TODAY'S FASTING:** Choose your fasting object for today. Start small and grow. Why not fast from a form of entertainment? Facebook? One meal? TV? Write it on the line below and stick to it.

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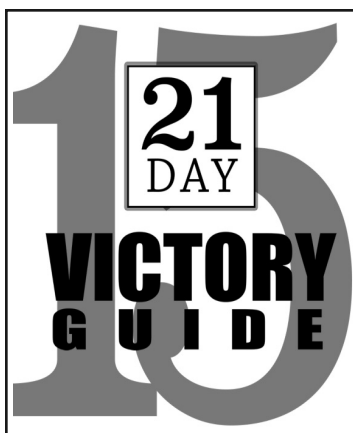
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - PEACE

Scripture: “and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:7).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

I will not surprise or shock you by saying that you and I are under spiritual attack. The reason for this is very simple — we are Christians, and we live in a war zone. The battle is between good and evil. Now here is the Good News; Jesus has already won the victory! As we consider peace, which is one the Fruit of the Spirit, this is not about the absence of conflict. In fact, His peace is what guards our hearts and minds in the warfare. This peace is a supernatural experience, sometimes in the middle of the storm. It cannot be understood or produced naturally. It comes with the fullness of the Holy Spirit. These are the attributes of God's peace:

1. Sense of well-being and fulfillment that comes from God and is dependent on His presence
2. Tranquility, rest, harmony, the absence of agitation or discord
3. An inner leading for decision-making and discernment

Without the peace of God operating in our lives, we can become very easily rattled, shaken, tormented, and discouraged in our faith. With His peace, we will WIN God's Way every day.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray to be filled with the Holy Spirit today.
- Pray for families, that His peace will be consistently experienced, so our homes would be places of peace.
- Pray for our communities: that those captured by racism, bigotry, hatred, anger, and violence will be healed by the blood of Jesus — so that we all may come together in peace.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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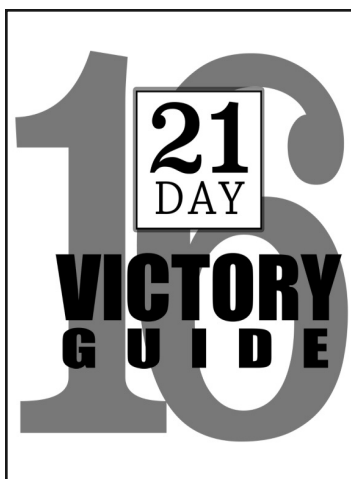
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - LONGSUFFERING

Scripture: "For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:24-25).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

I love the life-truth found in the word "hope". It describes our eager anticipation for something good to happen. We haven't received it yet, but we sure are looking forward to the minute it comes!

I know that everyone reading this is waiting for a hope to become a reality. The Bible teaches that faith is the substance of things hoped for. In other words, until we have what we are hoping for, we have to wait in faith.

This is God's perfect plan for us. He could just make everything quick and easy, but that would spoil us and we would never grow in faith. He knew that it would be difficult to wait, so as only God could do, He made longsuffering a fruit of the Holy Spirit. He helps us to endure and actively wait with patience by the power of the Spirit. I am confident that, when the time is right, all of the promises that we are hoping for in faith God will fulfill.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Ask if He's waiting on you for anything, and for the courage to obey.
- Ask Him to raise the fruit of longsuffering in you, and that you will be patient with others as He is patient with us.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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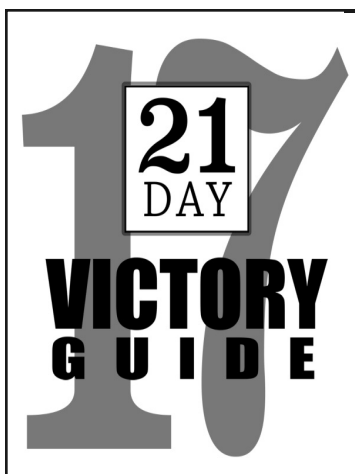
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - KINDNESS

Scripture: “Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Jesus is the ultimate role model for all of us. He fully walked and operated in all 9 fruits of the Holy Spirit. He was the kindest man ever. His heart was tender toward God and toward all the people around Him. He not only cared, but He acted to help in every way possible. Jesus walked fully in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Once you and I allow the Holy Spirit to fill us, the quality of the kindness we show will be more Christ-like. We cannot help but be more kind to others as God's love is flowing through us.

All of the anger, strife, lust, and other ways of man will be covered by the kindness and love of God. This will make our lives much better — allowing us to become the person God made us to be and then live the type of life He intended.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray that we would yield to the Spirit's work to develop His fruit of kindness in our lives.
- Pray that the fruit of kindness would be lived out in our relationships to bless and encourage others.
- Pray that the Lord will use this fruit to help us reach out to those who don't know Him.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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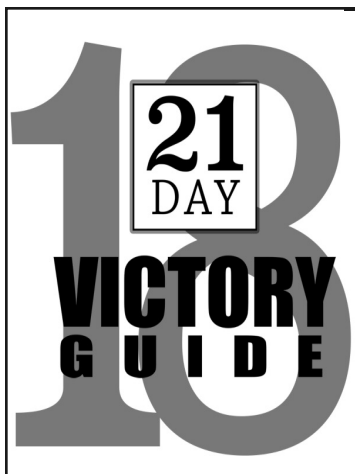
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - GOODNESS

Scripture: “And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?” (Romans 2:3-4).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

This particular quality has a real drawing power to it. Not only does the goodness of God draw people directly to Him, but this fruit of goodness operating in a believer can also draw people directly to God through the way we live.

Spirit-filled saints who are walking with many of these fruits operating through them are like a magnet. I have heard many testimonies from people who have been saved — saying that what drew them in was the love and goodness they saw shining through another believer. In most cases, the Christian that was being observed didn't even know it.

In this verse, Paul urges us not to judge others. I used to be a quick judge and jury. But God convicted me that how could I be a righteous judge when I didn't know all the facts? Now I have learned to trust Him and be thankful for His goodness, patience, and forgiveness toward me.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray that our lives will mirror God's goodness.
- Pray that the next generation will be inspired by the goodness of the Lord.
- Pray that our cities and communities will witness the goodness of the Lord through the way we Christians demonstrate the fruit and gifts of His Spirit.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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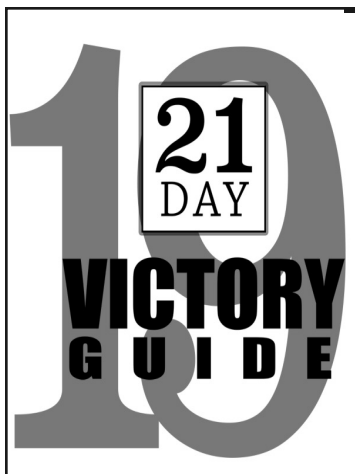
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - FAITHFULNESS

Scripture: "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Our world seems to celebrate the self-centered and powerful, whose only goal and ambition is to get as much as they can, as fast as they can, without concern for right or wrong. They are more than willing to cheat, steal, and lie to achieve their goals. They are unjust in much!

That is not Winning God's Way. God is faithful. I have often said that people of faith should be faithful people.

As Christ followers, we must be filled with the Holy Spirit and watch the fruit of faithfulness flow out to our hurting world. Don't miss the promise in today's scripture! As we are faithful with the little that we have today, we'll someday soon be trusted to be faithful with much.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray for faithful people who can teach others.
- Thank the Lord that our character can change to be more like His.  
Ask the Holy Spirit to do a work in you to exalt Christ as Lord of Lords and demonstrate the power of His love.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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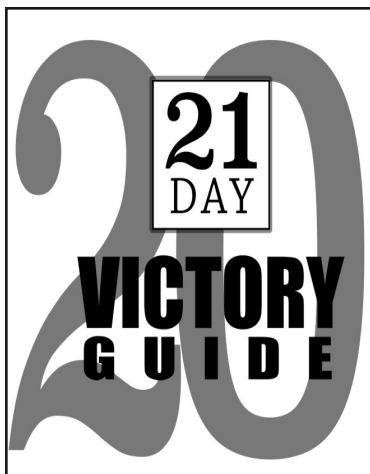
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - GENTLENESS

Scripture: "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Galatians 6:1).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Many men will draw back a bit from this next fruit, which is the quality of gentleness. That is because many confuse gentleness with weakness. This couldn't be more wrong.

While Jesus walked on our earth as a man, there were times when He would forcefully engage and confront evil, like He did with some of the Scribes, Pharisees, and money changers. But there were many other times when He dealt with people very gently, with kindness and love. He is the perfect role model for all of us to learn to walk in life with a great abundance of gentleness.

As we surrender to the Holy Spirit, His divine fruits begin operating and flowing through us, and it becomes easier to sense His presence. We put aside our judgments and become God's agents of love, restoration, and new beginnings.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Let us pray for gentle hearts in our dealings with family and friends.
- Pray for a gentle spirit when we are challenged or attacked.
- Pray for courage to stand up against unrighteousness and mockery.
- Pray for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

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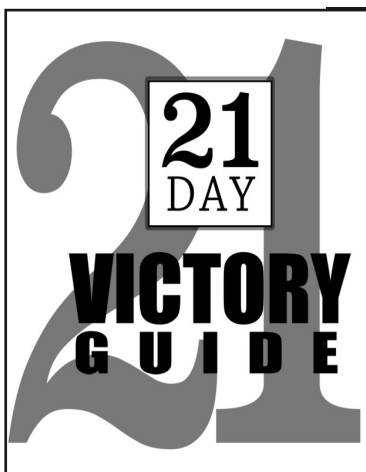
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## TODAY'S FOCUS: THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT - SELF-CONTROL

Scripture: "Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control" (1 Corinthians 7:5).

### A CLOSER LOOK:

Who is in control? That is often the bottom-line question in life. Whether we say so or not, we all want to have some degree of control. That is very understandable; it's the human way. But Winning God's Way in life isn't about being in control. What I am about to say sounds wrong, but it isn't. To be eternally victorious in life, we must completely surrender!

Our human way must be put aside and replaced by God's supernatural presence. The Holy Spirit lives in us, and His gifts and fruit are ready for us to draw upon. The fruit of self-control is critical in times of testing and temptation. I am not talking about our willpower to do the right thing — because it will fail. Our victory is to rely on God and use His power to do the right thing. In Christ, we are more than conquerors. We don't have to be in control, but be eager for His supernatural power to give us the fruit of self-control.

### PRAY TODAY:

- Pray that you will be filled with the Holy Spirit today.
- Pray He gives wisdom to wisely walk in self-control.
- We don't want to isolate ourselves. Ask God for an accountability partner to stand with.
- Listen for His reply; then write it below.

**TODAY'S FASTING:** Choose your fasting object for today. Start small and grow. Why not fast from a form of entertainment? Facebook? One meal? TV? Write it on the line below and stick to it.

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